Searcy Kniffen

RDG 4402

25 February 2013

Scaffolded Reading Experience:

*And Then There Were None*

by Agatha Christie

**Pre-Reading Activities:**

1. Students share predictions as to the meaning of the title.
2. Building background knowledge of the author.
3. Background knowledge of the time period and setting.
4. Discuss the nursery rhyme “Ten Little Indians” after explaining the previous title of the novel was *Ten Little Indians.*

**During-Reading Activities (Homework):**

1. Students create a character log, in which they write or draw in their chosen fashion key details about specific characters.
2. Throughout reading, students log their prediction as to the character responsible for the murders.
3. Students compare lines of the “Ten Little Indians” nursery rhyme to the current happenings.

**Post-Reading Activities:**

1. Students choose a character from the novel. They then create a journal entry from the character’s point of view regarding the most recent happenings. The journal entry is to resemble what that character may have written in their personal journal at night. Who do they suspect? What are their inner thoughts regarding the other characters on the island? Students should feel free to be creative.
2. In groups, students formulate another ending based on their personal journal entries regarding speculation of the murderer.
3. Students write an essay either supporting or contradicting this novel as the best-selling mystery of all time OR students write an essay in which they suggest changes to the novel that would better express modern times.

**Synopsis**

*And Then There Were None* is a mystery novel written by Agatha Christie, which was published in 1939. To date, it is the number one selling mystery novel. Also, the novel is one of the top ten selling books of all time.

The novel is quite properly titled, as the plot is constantly presenting a dwindling number of characters encased in mystery. Upon the start, characters are introduced in brief, yet thoroughly detailed passages. We learn the alleged reasons for the characters’ invitations to the infamous Indian Island, located off the coast of Devon, England. Each character is given a different explanation as to their requested presence, which is signed by a member of the Owen family if the signature is even legible. Upon their arrival at the one and only building on Indian Island, a mansion of sorts, the guests meet the butler and maid who explain that the owner, a Mr. Owen, will be in tomorrow due to an unexpected delay. Upon hearing the name of Owen, the characters come to find out that not a single one of them knows a Mr. Owen, or has ever met such man in person. Hence begins the true mysterious tone of the novel.

That night, after a group dinner, a recording is played which paints each character in a murderous light, accusing each of responsibility in different murders. It is at this time that the first death occurs. Shortly after this, characters discover each of them has the nursery rhyme of “Ten Little Indians” framed and hanging in their respective quarters. The following day, they find that another character has died, this time in her sleep. From this point out, the intensity rises, as the remaining characters try to unravel the mystery at hand. However, others continue to pass over the following days at the island, and none of their calls for help are answered. They are essentially stranded on this island, while one by one, they mysteriously drop dead. The author writes in such a way that it is impossible for even the reader to solve the mystery. Luckily, things are explained in quite a twist at the end thanks to a letter in a bottle.

The author’s writing is simple but effective, which I believe leads to a good part of the novel’s appeal. At no point does the reader feel as though they are reading unnecessary fluff. Everything is easily conveyed, while maintaining the overall unsolvable mystery.